

February 21, 2017

Environment Committee Public Hearing Testimony

SB 832 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF THE HABITUATION OF DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS.

Dear members of the Environment Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify IN OPPOSITION of SB 832.

I oppose SB 832 as currently written as it will have a devastating impact on feral cats and their caregivers.

Sec. 1 (e), which defines "potentially dangerous animal" for purposes of this section, includes "felidae," a broad family of felids that includes domestic cats. I ask that this language be amended to exclude domestic cats. As written this would impact feral cat caregivers providing an important public service to the community by reducing cat overpopulation through TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) programs, a science-based approach that has been proven effective. In my role as Manager of Community Program for Our Companions, I work with dedicated caregivers, who give generously of their time and resources, to assist managed feral colonies. These caregivers should not be penalized for their commitment to assist the feral cats in their care.

Our Companions Animal Rescue supports TNR efforts and feels strongly that protections should be given to those who are part of the solution to ending pet overpopulation in our communities. I hope this language will be modified to change the definitions so domestic cats (and dogs) are excluded.

Unlike last year's bill (2016's HB 5315), SB 832 makes no provision for education, and public education is precisely what is necessary here.

I thank you for considering my testimony on this important piece of legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

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